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(Original Signature of Member)

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. _____

To direct the Secretary of Agriculture to establish a program under which the Secretary awards grants to States or State departments of agriculture for the purposes of providing support to agricultural fairs for losses sustained due to COVID–19.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. PANETTA introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on _____

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Agriculture to establish a program under which the Secretary awards grants to States or State departments of agriculture for the purposes of providing support to agricultural fairs for losses sustained due to COVID–19.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This act may be cited as the “Agricultural Fairs Res-
5 cue Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. AGRICULTURAL FAIR RESCUE GRANTS.**

2 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than September 30,
3 2021, the Secretary of Agriculture, acting through the Ad-
4 ministrator of the Agricultural Marketing Service, shall
5 award a grant to each State department of agriculture (or
6 other appropriate State agency assigned with the pro-
7 motion of agricultural fairs) for the purposes of providing
8 support to eligible agricultural fairs for losses sustained
9 by such fairs due to COVID–19.

10 (b) AMOUNT OF GRANT.—The amount of a grant to
11 a State or State department of agriculture under this sec-
12 tion shall be based on the difference between the average
13 attendance at agricultural fairs in the State for a calendar
14 year occurring during the 3-calendar-year period begin-
15 ning with calendar year 2017 (or over a shorter period,
16 if attendance data is not available for the entire 3-cal-
17 endar-year period) compared to calendar year 2020.

18 (c) CONDITIONS.—As a condition on the receipt of
19 a grant under this section, a State or State department
20 of agriculture shall agree—

21 (1) to prioritize supporting eligible agricultural
22 fairs in the State facing the greatest financial hard-
23 ship; and

24 (2) to use not more than 5 percent of grant
25 funds for administrative costs incurred in providing
26 support to eligible agricultural fairs.

1 (d) USE OF FUNDS.—A State or State department
2 of agriculture selected to receive a grant under this section
3 may only use grant funds to assist eligible agricultural
4 fairs that—

5 (1) host annual events that are drivers and pro-
6 moters of agribusiness in the State (as determined
7 by the State); and

8 (2) have experienced a closure, stoppage, or
9 cancellation of a local, county or State fair oper-
10 ations as a direct or indirect result of—

11 (A) the COVID–19 national emergency; or

12 (B) any associated actions taken by any
13 governmental authority at the Federal, State,
14 county, or municipal level in response to that
15 national emergency;

16 (3) agree to, and demonstrate the intent to, re-
17 establish a fair within 18 months of the termination
18 of the declaration specified in subsection (f)(2);

19 (4) agree to use all grant funds within the 18-
20 month period that begins on the date on which such
21 funds are received; and

22 (5) agree to use funds received pursuant to this
23 section for operating capital expenses, to reimburse
24 operating expenses paid from reserves not originally
25 intended for operating expenses, repay indebtedness

1 incurred to pay operating expenses, or repay other
2 third parties that contributed to funding operating
3 expenses, but not for capital improvements.

4 (e) FUNDING.—

5 (1) IN GENERAL.—There is authorized to be
6 appropriated to make grants under this section
7 \$500,000,000 for fiscal year 2021, each succeeding
8 fiscal year occurring during the COVID–19 national
9 emergency, and the first fiscal year immediately fol-
10 lowing the termination of such national emergency.

11 (2) ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES.—Of the funds
12 made available under paragraph (1) to carry out this
13 section for a fiscal year, not more than 8 percent
14 may be used for expenses related to administering
15 the program under this section.

16 (f) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

17 (1) ELIGIBLE AGRICULTURAL FAIR.—The term
18 “eligible agricultural fair” means a local, county, or
19 State fair that—

20 (A) is a subunit of a government entity, a
21 public corporation organized and existing pur-
22 suant to State law, or is owned and operated as
23 a not-for-profit organization described in sec-
24 tion 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Code of

1 1986 and exempt from taxation under section
2 501(a) of such Code; and

3 (B) helps farmers, ranchers, or foresters—

4 (i) promote their products; or

5 (ii) expand agricultural markets
6 through conservation programs, agricul-
7 tural research, educational programs, or
8 other events that encourage agriculture,
9 horticulture, and the domestic arts.

10 (2) COVID–19 NATIONAL EMERGENCY.—The
11 term “COVID–19 national emergency” means the
12 national emergency declared by the President under
13 the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1601 et
14 seq.) on March 13, 2020, with respect to COVID–
15 19.

16 (3) STATE.—The term “State” means the sev-
17 eral States, the District of Columbia, the Common-
18 wealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the
19 United States Virgin Islands, and the Common-
20 wealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

21 (4) STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.—
22 The term “State department of agriculture” means
23 the agency, commission, or department of a State
24 government responsible for agriculture in the State.